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Cabana-rama

Gourmet kitchens,
his-and-her changing rooms,
state-of-the-art gyms—
the new breed of pool house
is about more
than just the pool

By Meg Cohen Ragas

THEY COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES, SOME with kitchens, others with wet bars. Some double as guest houses, gyms, offices, even



summer yoga studios. But whatever the function of the pool house, one

thing has become crystal clear: Pool houses are the new status symbols.

“They allow the opportunity for creative interpretation,” says architect Reed Axelrod, who designed a pool house for a client who lives in a striking 1925 Georgian Colonial on 40 acres in Fort Washington. “They take on different uses depending on the client’s wants and needs.” Axelrod studied 18th-century Colonial outbuildings in Williamsburg, Virginia and Deerfield, Massachusetts, to come up with the plan for his 750-square-foot, double-gabled pool house with Dutch siding



DINING ALFRESCO: The bluestone patio of this Fort Washington pool house is the perfect setting for a late-afternoon lunch, ABOVE, TOP.

FORT WASHINGTON POOL HOUSE PHOTOS BY PASCAL BLANCON



POOL PARTY: When the owners of this Haverford pavilion entertain, they tent the entire pool area and serve out of the pool house's first-floor kitchen.

PHOTO THIS PAGE: BARRY HALKIN



COMMUNING WITH NATURE: All of the spaces in the Fort Washington pool house, including the changing room, **BELOW**, and the cabana room, **BOTTOM**, have plenty of windows to let the outside in.

and a metal roof (built by Pilone Construction, Inc.). “The double gable was a very common shape in outbuildings from that period,” he says.

Situated 150 feet from the main house, visible but also retaining its privacy, it’s comprised of the cabana room, which the client has outfitted as a gym, a changing room, a sauna and a powder room. It’s perpendicular to the 75-foot-long concrete lap pool, which is partially gated by a weathered wooden trellis.

The pool’s Pennsylvania bluestone terrace is echoed in the pool house’s large bluestone patio, which acts as an outdoor room and is accessed by French doors from the cabana room. Knotty cypress floors and exposed beams inside reflect its woody, one-with-nature setting. “The client wanted it tucked away, like a secret hideaway,” says Diana Henze, Axelrod’s project architect on the job. “It acts as overflow, an extension of the house, where she can exercise and spend quiet time in an indoor-outdoor space. She wanted specific, unique things, like a window in the sauna, so she could view the property.”

Property plays a large role in determining the look, feel and location of a pool house. For a Haverford client who lives in a handsome 1928 Eyre & McIlvaine stone-and-brick main house, architect Spence Kass designed a two-story pool pavilion that faces the breakfast wing of the main house and plays off its architectural style down to the exact materials—stone, brick and tile. “I wanted it to *(continued on page 110)*

